United Nations E/CN.17/2002/PC.2/6/Add.9

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
15 January 2002

Original: English

Commission on Sustainable Development acting as the preparatory committee for the World Summit on Sustainable Development
Second preparatory session
28 January-8 February 2002

Multi-stakeholder dialogue segment of the second session of the Commission on Sustainable Development acting as the preparatory committee for the World Summit on Sustainable Development

Note by the Secretary-General

Addendum

Dialogue paper by farmers' organizations*

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02-21984 (E) 290102

Introduction

1. The inclusion of chapter 32, entitled "Strengthening the role of farmers", in Agenda 21[1] was much appreciated by farmers' organizations throughout the world. This chapter recognizes that "a farmer-centred approach is the key to the attainment of sustainability in both developed and developing countries (para. 32.3)" and that "successful implementation of these programmes lies in the motivation and attitudes of individual farmers and government policies that would provide incentives to farmers to manage their natural resources efficiently and in a sustainable way" (para. 32.4).

2. Unlike other primary industries, most agricultural production is not carried out by large corporations. It is achieved by a large number of individual farm families. Farmers play an essential role in assuring the food security of each nation. Farmers are also the chief stewards and managers of extensive natural resources, the owners and architects of much of the landscape and the protectors of a precious soil resource.

Agriculture must be a development priority

3. Neither international institutions nor national Governments are giving agriculture the priority it so badly needs. In fact, over the last 10 years, agriculture has ceased to occupy the central place in development programmes that it did in the past.

4. Investment in agriculture and food production is at historically low levels, and yet every day, 24,000 people die from hunger and related causes.

5. Current trade, investment and development strategies have achieved little progress in meeting the United Nations targets to reduce by half the number of people suffering from hunger, or living in poverty, by the year 2015.

6. In poor countries, most of the population is located in the rural areas. The struggle against poverty must therefore be addressed through agriculture and rural development. Key elements in winning this struggle entail establishing a more equitable distribution of resources, and more sustainable patterns of consumption, besides more sustainable methods of production. These are essential not only to fighting poverty, but also for long-term environmental sustainability.

7. The World Summit on Sustainable Development offers an important opportunity to change this situation. The drain of resources away from agriculture must be stopped, and policies need to be focused more on reducing the widening poverty gap, which is particularly destructive to the small-farm sector in areas with specific difficulties.

Sustainability applied to agriculture

8. Globalization of world trade, consumer-led quality requirements, regional economic integration, and persistent poverty and hunger in many parts of the world — these are the new realities and challenges facing agriculture today.

9. For farmers in most developing countries, immediate, short-term necessities are of paramount importance. The highest priorities are therefore to achieve food security and poverty eradication for economic growth. Policies are needed that focus on access to land and secure land tenure arrangements, on access to water and secure water rights, on access to genetic resources, and on access to credit at prices that farmers can afford. Provision of rural infrastructure is essential, and adequate financial resources are required for agricultural development and for poverty eradication.

10. Farmers in the industrialized countries are faced with strong demands from citizens and consumers for protecting the environment (nature management, landscape), for ensuring animal welfare and other ethical actions, and for maintaining rural communities.

11. All sectors (government, consumers, farmers etc.) must be willing to pay the price for long-term sustainability because adopting sustainable practices may not always translate into cheaper food, at least in the short term. Some of society's needs, such as for housing and urban development, may have to be sacrificed to preserve lands for food production or environmental purposes.

Experience in meeting the objectives of chapter 32 of Agenda 21

12. There are four main aims in chapter 32. These are:

(a) Decentralized decision-making;

(b) Access to resources and technology for small-scale farmers, and particularly for women and other vulnerable groups;

(c) Incentives for farmers to manage resources in an efficient and sustainable way;

(d) Enhanced participation of farmers in the design and implementation of policies through their representative organizations.

13. Chapter 32 also provides for these aims to be met through four main actions, which are:

(a) Institutional framework;

(b) Financing;

(c) Research, extension and education;

(d) Capacity-building.

14. The present paper is the result of a consultation process with many farmers' organizations throughout the world. It seeks to contribute to strengthening the implementation of chapter 32 of Agenda 21 in the future by mainly focusing on positive examples of progress in meeting the specified goals and overcoming constraints. However, it should be noted that, overall, much still needs to be done in order to achieve the original ambitions of the Earth Summit held in 1992.

I. Decentralized decision-making

15. Over at least the last 10 years, many countries have undertaken important institutional and economic reforms. These reforms concern:

- Withdrawal of the State from agriculture;
- Decentralization;
- Liberalization of the economy.

16. These reforms give more responsibility to local communities and to individuals, including farmers, for their own development.

17. Decision-making for resource management in several countries has been devolved to regional and district councils, comprising elected councillors, who develop regional and district plans. A key feature of the Resource Management Act of New Zealand is community involvement through consultation in the development of plans. However, the planning process can be contentious with competing interests, and farmers often feel their views and requirements are inadequately considered compared with the urban community's increasing demands.

18. In Mali and Algeria, a network of autonomous regional chambers of agriculture, and a Permanent Assembly of Chambers of Agriculture, have been put in place. These agricultural chambers are the decentralized interface between farmers and their partners in the public and private sectors. More recently, in 1999, Madagascar started a process of decentralized decision-making, through a Plan of Action for Rural Development. This Plan has been subdivided into 20 regional plans, based upon agroecological criteria. The regional and communal development plans were the result of a participatory process. However, peasant organizations were insufficiently represented in the working groups that drew up the regional plans, and women farmers were not invited to participate.

19. It should be noted that decision-making at the community level must still be informed by sound information (for example, scientific research to understand causes and environmental effects and development of management options) on which to base decisions, and that funding for this purpose can be a significant burden for many communities.

II. Access to resources and technology for small-scale farmers, and particularly for women and other vulnerable groups

20. Poverty cannot be eradicated, and the food security targets set by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) met, without providing equitable access to land and water resources for small farmers. Having access to land and having security of tenure are the best possible incentive for individual farmers to preserve and improve soil fertility. Farmers and their organizations should be

involved in the programme formulation and implementation phases of land-based development, as well as in the policy formulation process.

21. There is pressure on land and water resources as a result of population growth. Farmers are concerned about water's being diverted away from agriculture. Water is a public good and has to remain one. In most countries, the State is the guarantor of this scarce resource, and must allocate scarce supplies to priority needs such as food security.

22. Management of water resources should be based on a participatory approach, involving different stakeholders and users in watersheds. The experience of the creation of the Coopeortega (Sociedad de Responsabilidad Limitada) in Costa Rica proved that there is an important potential in rural communities for active participation towards sustainable management of water resources. The reason for this is that local communities are the immediate victims of water problems, and are motivated as interested parties when their livelihoods are threatened.

23. Empowerment of women so that they enjoy a meaningful participation in watershed management groups is necessary. Empowering women through access to information on simple water purification procedures, as well as making it possible for them to work through water committees, and ultimately in catchment management agencies, will ensure that women's voices are heard in the quest for safe, available water. It is through education and communication with women that basic attitudes to water will change. Significant progress has also been made in South Africa on this matter.

24. It is widely recognized that improving women's access to land leads to wide-ranging and positive changes at the individual, household and community levels and can have direct implications for regional and national economic growth. Throughout the world, many Governments have developed new laws, policies and programmes that seek to strengthen the rights to land of women and other vulnerable groups. However, in many instances, these positive steps have not led to changes at the individual, household and community levels. Instead, local customs, institutions and power relations continue to discriminate against women and to block their access to new rights and entitlements. Women and other vulnerable groups still often lack the power, resources or knowledge to utilize these new legal rights and instruments. Governments must work together with civil society, and in particular with women farmers and their representative organizations, to ensure that future reforms reflect women's needs, aspirations and capacities and to guarantee that women are able to enjoy the benefits of these reforms.

25. Commission on Human Rights resolution 2001/34 entitled "Women's equal ownership of, access to and control over land and the equal rights to own property and to adequate housing",[2] recently adopted on 23 April 2001, is an important reaffirmation of these principles, and the efforts of Governments, working in partnership with farmers and their representative organizations, to implement the principles and objectives contained therein are to be encouraged.

III. Incentives for farmers to manage resources in an efficient and sustainable way

A. National policies

1. General policy framework

26. While sustainable agriculture has been supported in the documents of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, including Agenda 21, its full meaning and mainstreaming into agriculture in many countries have yet to be attained. Therefore, there is a continuing necessity of engaging Governments in creating a favourable policy environment for sustainable agriculture. This engagement revolves around themes of agricultural, forestry and fishery modernization, food security/safety and modern biotechnology, agricultural trade, irrigation etc.

27. The agricultural sector has improved its environmental impact in the decade 1990-2000, mainly owing to two fundamental factors:

- The acknowledgement of the role of farmers in safeguarding the environment;
- The approval of basic regulations aiming at the promotion of the quality of agricultural products and environmental protection.

28. A policy framework that provides market signals to farmers has been a strong factor in the development of sustainable and efficient farming practices in certain

countries. The removal of subsidies in New Zealand in 1984 has brought about changes in land use. Large areas of marginal land that had been brought into production using subsidies have been planted with pine forestry or allowed to revert to native vegetation.

29. The trend in farm policy is to move from systems of commodity price support — and sometimes input support — to those where direct payments are given to producers. These direct payments are often made for environmental objectives, for example, landscape, or nature conservation.

2. Government programmes to protect the environment

30. In the industrialized countries, there are many examples of government programmes to protect the environment. These include: measures to reduce the use of pesticides and the loss of soil nutrients, rewarding farmers for stewardship or environmental services, promoting organic agriculture, maintaining biodiversity, and developing protected areas.

31. In the developing countries, resources are very limited for such programmes. However, there has been an increase in programmes to promote integrated pest management (IPM) techniques, soil conservation practices, and closer adaptation of agricultural practices to the local ecology.

Nature management

32. Farmers are increasingly called upon to provide "environmental services". This means that the farmer is asked to actively protect nature or other functions. For providing these extra activities, the farmer is paid by the public authorities. Examples are the protection of birds' nests, and (in the Netherlands) storage of water on farms in times of extreme rainfall.

33. Biodiversity is also an important goal for environmental work in many countries. In Sweden, where the arable land area is home to 90 per cent of the plants that are on the threatened list, there has been a programme for advising and educating on these questions for several years.

34. At the level of the European Union (EU), the European Economic Community Bird Protection Directive, and the Habitat Directive, are concrete and binding results of pursuing the goal of sustainable development. The ambitions of EU were expressed in the conclusions of the June 2001 European Council meeting, which stated that the decline in biodiversity must be stopped by 2010 at the latest.

35. Agro-biodiversity represents the careful work and knowledge of many generations of rural and indigenous peoples. Farming communities should have the right to freely use the diverse genetic resources, including seeds, that have been developed by them throughout history.

36. In Canada, the Species at Risk Act has been reintroduced, and the Canadian Federation of Agriculture is urging the Government to work closely with stakeholders in the development of regulations to protect endangered species. Farmers need good information on habitat protection and on the factors needed to protect a species. Incentives such as tax treatments, and compensation are also necessary, as well as agreements that protect farmers from legal prosecution. Further, the Government is asked to recognize the voluntary efforts being undertaken by farmers and to promote partnerships among sectors to increase conservation efforts.

37. In Austria, the Law on Forests lays down strict rules for the correct maintenance, management and protection of woodland, in order to guard against the overuse or depletion of this resource, for the benefit of the whole country.

38. The need to protect nature is widely recognized. There is no doubt, however, that in some cases, development of farming is hindered because of the protection of special species of animals and plants. The development of dialogue is therefore very important so that as many stakeholders as possible are committed to the process, in particular at local level.

Pest management

39. Over the last decade, there has been a significant reduction in the use of active ingredients in pesticides (herbicides, insecticides and fungicides) on farms, and an increase in integrated pest management practices.

40. In Denmark, for example, the quantities of active substances applied as pesticides have more than halved over the last 10-15 years. The Danish Environmental Protection Agency has reassessed 213 active ingredients in pesticides. Of these, only 78 substances were granted full approval. At the EU level, the list of

approved phytosanitary substances is also being revised.

41. Sweden has undertaken a Safe Pesticide Use Campaign. Through this campaign, information in the form of brochures, information sheets, and advertisements in agricultural magazines and on the Internet, has been distributed to all 30,000 farmers in the country that have the qualifications necessary to use pesticides. Training courses have also been arranged locally in a large number of venues. All the information was made available free of charge and was financed by the Swedish Government and EU.

42. In Côte d'Ivoire, farmers in the Association Nationale des Organisations Professionnelles Agricoles de Côte d'Ivoire (ANOPACI) are working with the National Development Support Agency (ANADER) to promote integrated pest management techniques. In the east of the country, farmers are being encouraged to use bio-pesticides, such as leaves from the neem, papaya and pepper plants, to control pests in market gardening (*cultures maraîchères*), in grain storage, and in cocoa production. In the rice sector, eight farmers' field schools have been set up to train farmers on pest management and the integrated use of pesticides. Application of integrated pest management has led to a decrease in production costs, and also to yield increases of 25-60 per cent.

43. In the Philippines, the Government is also promoting integrated pest management. This is done through farmers' field schools, which are highly participative and experiential in approach.

Reducing loss of nutrients

44. In many countries, plans have been put in place to reduce the leaching of nitrogen, and to cut ammonia emissions from agriculture.

45. The average reduction in leaching of nitrogen from arable land in Denmark is estimated at 32 per cent during the period 1990-1999. Sales of fertilizers to agriculture have dropped by 37 per cent in the last 15 years, whereas the levels of manure use have remained stable.

46. In several Northern European countries, like Denmark, the Netherlands and Belgium, strict rules have also been introduced concerning the storage and spreading of animal manure.

Adaptation of agriculture to the local ecology

47. Farmers throughout the world have adapted their farming practices to the physical environment and climate in which they live.

48. Within the framework of the National Plan for the Development of Agriculture (PNDA) in Algeria, adopted in 2000, there is a programme that returns agriculture to its natural territory. This not only improves efficiency, but also fights against desertification. Thus, there are areas suited to vineyards and others suited to tree crop production. Cereals should not be grown on fragile lands that are prone to erosion.

49. In Côte d'Ivoire, soil conservation and agroforestry programmes have been established, aiming at restoring soil fertility. Reforestation strategies, involving the farmers, have been put in place in order to combat deforestation and desertification.

Organic farming

50. Organic agriculture has increased in many European countries following the introduction of EU support for this type of farming. Northern Europe in particular has greatly developed organic production, but even in countries such as Italy in Southern Europe, 1 per cent of the farmers and 2 per cent of the agricultural lands are now involved in organic agriculture.

51. Sweden has set goals for increasing the importance of organic farming. By 2005, it is intended that 20 per cent of the land should be farmed organically, with 10 per cent of the milk, meat and lamb being organic. The Swedish Farmers' Federation is supporting these goals. This increase in organic production is aimed at meeting an increasing demand for organically produced food. However, there is a discussion concerning whether more organic farming is the solution to many environmental questions in agriculture. For example, there may be more effective measures in traditional farming for achieving environmental benefits.

52. France has recently set up an Agency for the Development of Organic Agriculture, which brings together into one body the relevant government departments along with organic farmers, manufacturers and distributors.

53. Several farmers' organizations have consultants on their staff to advise farmers on how to make the changeover (legislative and technical) from traditional to organic farming.

Agri-tourism

54. Italy is one country that is active in the development of protected areas. Following the approval of the related national law, Italy has created 36 national parks, which cover 10 per cent of total land area of the country, stimulating farming and agri-tourism in these areas.

55. Farm tourism is increasing. In France, 20,000 farms are now involved in agri-tourism: they provide accommodation, meals using local products, and leisure activities and demonstrate farming activities. Further, 15 per cent of French farmers sell produce directly from their farms.

Climate change

56. Biomass from agriculture is underutilized as a source for energy production, that is to say, organic fuel (biodiesel and bioethanol) for engines and firewood for heating. In order to conform to the requirements of the Kyoto Protocol[3] to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change[4] with respect to reducing emissions of greenhouse gases, it is recommended that tax policies be adopted to promote the use of renewable energy sources from agriculture.

B. International policies

57. Trade rules of the World Trade Organization and International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank lending need to be better coordinated and more focused on eliminating poverty and delivering sustainable global development. The benefits of globalization are very uneven, with small farmers in developing countries often being marginalized. Poorer countries find themselves in a weak position in global financial and trading systems. They are under strong pressure from debt burdens, low commodity prices, and unfavourable trading relationships.

IV. Enhanced participation of farmers in the design and implementation of policies through their representative organizations

Codes of good agricultural practice/certification schemes

58. Besides the sustainable agriculture programmes run by government agencies, farmers' organizations and industry groups are taking initiatives to promote sustainable farming practices and technologies through codes of practice and certification schemes, for example, the British "little red tractor" farming standard, and "*agriculture raisonnée*" in France organized by the Forum de l'Agriculture Raisonnée Respectueuse de l'Environnment (FARRE). "Forest certification" is also a tool to promote sustainable forest management and marketing of forest products in Finland. The Belgian Farmers' Union (Boerenbond) is developing a code of careful handling of animals. Codes of practice should be developed from the bottom-up, involving the producers who have intimate knowledge of the conditions and challenges of their particular farming systems.

59. The New Zealand Agrichemical Education Trust has developed a training and accreditation programme, called "Growsafe", which is aimed at all pesticide users in the country. The fertilizer industry in conjunction with Federated Farmers has developed a Code of Practice for Fertilizer Use. French farmers' organizations established in 1991 voluntary actions for the integrated use of fertilizers ("Ferti-Mieux") and plant protection agents ("Phyto-Mieux"). These actions in France stimulate the initiative of farmers through farm trials, advice, communications with rural associations, and testing of sprayers.

60. Federatie van Land-en tuinbouworganisaties (LTO-Nederland) (the Netherlands farmers' union) develops guidelines for good agricultural practice to show what Netherlands growers have to do to protect the environment. Good agricultural practices are applied, too, in the German agricultural and forestry sectors. However, owing to the dynamic processes occurring in agriculture, the legislative authorities have admitted that a rigid and permanently accepted definition of "good agricultural practice" is not possible. Agricultural practices have to be adapted to

local soil and climatic conditions. The best farmers are continually seeking to improve the sustainability of their farms, and can develop best practice more rapidly than processes can document best practice. Information on best practice is useful as a basis for informing farmers of what their peers are achieving.

61. Starting in the early 1990s, farm organizations in Canada began seeking new methods of helping farmers to become more aware of their impact on the environment. As a result, Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) workbooks were devised. An Environmental Farm Plan is a producer-led, voluntary programme for farmers to assess the environmental impact of their farming operation with the goal of identifying areas of concern and actions that can minimize environmental risk.

Land care

62. The Landcare programme in Australia is a good example of a community-based approach to sustainable land and water management, supported by government at all levels. Promoted by the National Farmers' Federation and the Australian Conservation Foundation in the early 1990s, Landcare now has over 4,000 autonomous community groups in Australia, often organized around water catchment areas. The movement has spread to New Zealand, South Africa and other countries. Whole-farm planning is an important concept in land care management. Further, Landcare groups give preference to indigenous plant species for revegetation, thereby conserving local biodiversity.

63. In 1996, the Swedish Farmers' Federation decided to establish work groups within watershed catchment areas. In each group, 20-30 farmers and rural residents cooperate on a voluntary basis, together with a coordinator, to work out a locally adapted plan to reduce plant nutrition leakage in the area.

64. In early 2000, the Countryside Canada Program was launched as a partnership between Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, the Canadian Federation of Agriculture and Wildlife Habitat Canada. Through examples of outstanding land stewardship, the programme seeks to promote better conservation practices throughout the agricultural community. Often the difference between good stewardship and poor land-use management is simply an increase in awareness of the best management practices that allow both agriculture and wildlife to thrive and exist in harmony.

Awareness-raising campaigns

65. In Madagascar and Côte d'Ivoire, awareness programmes have been achieved in collaboration with farmers' organizations and non-governmental organizations on issues related to bush fires, which have major drawbacks in respect of water resources availability as well as desertification.

66. Canadian farmers are involved in a Climate Change Action Fund Producer Awareness Programme (CCAF). This programme was developed to increase the awareness of producers and the public relative to greenhouse gases and agriculture and the management practices that can be utilized to reduce net emissions. In partnership with members of CCAF, the Canadian Federation of Agriculture is coordinating a national network of information-sharing to ensure that agriculture organizations have adequate resources through which to educate and inform individual producers.

Farmers' participation in sustainable agriculture programmes

67. In order to achieve sustainable food production, consumers, retailers, manufacturers and farmers, and also Governments, non-governmental organizations and environmental organizations must, in the end, have the same vision and goals. This requires a new approach by the public authorities. Instead of top-down steering, an authority is needed that consults and works together with social organizations. The authority has to believe in the self-help power of the social sector in solving problems in society. In the Netherlands, this involves two models:

- Networking: non-binding agreements based on consultation and working together that state goals and timing;
- Self-steering: the authority only sets up the legal framework within which the participants in the chain then have to solve their problems.

68. There are several good examples of farmers having been included in sustainable agriculture

programmes. One is the new Cotonou Agreement between EU and 78 developing countries from the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) regions, which gives a key role to civil society participation in defining, implementing and evaluating development strategies and programmes. Another is in Uganda, where the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development involved civil society organizations in the budget consultative process, and in drawing up the country's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). In Belgium, the Flemish Minister of Agriculture and Environment has launched a public debate on sustainable agriculture, in which recommendations from civil society are being encouraged.

69. Farmers' organizations in Algeria (Chambers of Agriculture) were closely involved in the establishment of the first National Plan for Agricultural Development (PNDA), adopted in 2000 after almost 10 years of preparation. Farmers are guided by their professional organizations, without any intermediaries. They are free to participate or not participate in the Plan.

70. The Canadian Federation of Agriculture participates in both the Economic Management Advisory Committee (EMAC) and the Pest Management Advisory Council (PMAC), along with other stakeholders, with the shared goal of improving the current regulatory system.

71. In spite of progress made in respect of the participation of farmers in the design and implementation of policies through their representative organizations, many farmers are still not organized well enough to be able to participate, or their Governments are still not very open to such participation. For example, in Madagascar, the involvement of farmers in the development of the Action Plan for Rural Development (PADR) was virtually non-existent. Farmers were unable to participate in the debates, owing to a lack of capacity, especially in information and communication skills. In some countries, the agriculture organizations are still not even invited to participate in important development instruments such as national development corporations, and councils for economic and social development.

Initiatives by international institutions

72. Paragraph 32.9 of Agenda 21 states that "the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the World Food Programme (WFP), the World Bank, the regional development banks and other international organizations involved in rural development should involve farmers and their representatives in their deliberations, as appropriate".

73. Since the Earth Summit in 1992, there has been some opening up of major international institutions to civil society. The policies and practices of international and regional development organizations increasingly recognize that government-led development that does not actively involve citizens' organizations has frequently failed. Similarly, civil society-led development that lacks the enabling support of government has been neither sustainable nor scaled up to the level necessary to address needs on a countrywide basis.

74. Farmers wish to applaud the United Nations and member Governments for including major groups in its annual reviews of the different chapters of Agenda 21, in the form of multi-stakeholder dialogues.

75. IFAD, FAO, WFP, the World Bank and the regional development banks have historically worked in partnership with non-governmental organizations and civil society in order to empower communities. However, the fact that poverty is predominately rural (70 per cent of the poor live in rural communities) has resulted in a growing effort by these institutions to strengthen farmers' and rural peoples' organizations. The World Bank's collaboration with IFAP ("Partnering for Sustainability"), and the leadership role of IFAD in establishing the Popular Coalition to Eradicate Hunger and Poverty as a programme to strengthen the capacity of rural people to gain secure access to land and other productive assets, are two examples of recent efforts to involve farmers and their organizations.

76. Farmers are pleased to note that both IFAD's Rural Poverty Report, 2001, and the new World Bank's Rural Development Strategy promote a process to empower the rural poor and small farmers to take on more responsibility for their own development. The International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP) is working with the World Bank to achieve the goal that "every World Bank-financed agricultural services project should include support for producer organization involvement with a view towards empowering them and promoting effective partnerships

between producers' organizations, Governments and other stakeholders".

77. With extensive major group participation, FAO organized its first Forum on Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development, in March 2001, concurrent with the sixteenth session of the Committee on Agriculture. Farmers were key participants. Although the Forum was a side event rather than an integral part of the session of the Committee, this innovation was much appreciated. More recently, the FAO Sustainable Development Department has set up a working group on sustainable agriculture and rural development with major group focal points, including farmers, as part of the preparations for and follow-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

78. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Committee for Agriculture has held annual consultations with farmers' organizations for many years and, more recently, so has the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC). Farmers applaud the OECD for having launched its work on "Biotechnology and Food Security" in November 1999 with the holding of a broad stakeholder consultation. Farmers recommend that this practice be adopted by all intergovernmental organizations before launching examination of any new subject. Farmers' organizations' participation in OECD seminars and studies also stimulates farmers to be more active on questions related to the sustainability of agriculture.

79. Another significant initiative by Governments to involve farmers and their representatives in their deliberations was the first tripartite conference on Mediterranean agriculture, initiated by farmers and held in the European Parliament in June 2001. The event brought together members of the European Parliament and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, with the representatives of farmers, under the IFAP Mediterranean Committee, to try to bring agriculture to the top of the Euro-Mediterranean agenda.

80. The four main aims of chapter 32, described above, need to be supported by the four actions described directly below.

Institutional framework

81. Adequate infrastructure and an appropriate regulatory framework are essential to promoting sustainable agriculture. This is most visible in small-scale resource-poor areas, where the absence of a basic institutional framework is a major impediment to the economic survival of family farms and to food self-reliance. Many countries still do not yet have a national rural development plan, or framework, that functions effectively.

82. Factors influencing sustainability include:

- Policies for trade and investment, as well as for the sustainable development of agriculture;
- Secure property rights;
- Good governance and institutions;
- Good education and health systems;
- Good legal, financial, marketing, energy, transport and communications infrastructure;
- Safety nets to look after the disadvantaged.

Financing

83. Investment in agriculture is at historically low levels. World Bank lending for agriculture fell to its lowest level in history in 2000. Only 7 per cent of development loans were for agriculture. Official development assistance (ODA) has fallen to an all-time low over the past 10 years, and the share devoted to agriculture has been reduced. It is essential to raise ODA to the internationally agreed level of 0.7 per cent of gross national product (GNP).

84. At the national level too, it is important that a higher priority be given in budget allocations to questions of rural poverty, sustainable agriculture and food security.

85. Farmers may also need support from government in order to secure access to credit at prices that they can afford.

Research, extension and education

86. Government has a responsibility to continue to carry out basic research so that it is available to all. Farmers are concerned about the trend towards the privatization of genetic resources, with biodiversity's being concentrated in the hands of a few multinational corporate giants, where it is protected by patents or brought under breeders' rights regulations. Both

undermine farmers' rights to free access to common genetic resources. Optimum use should be made of biotechnological innovations that can enhance sustainability.

87. In the early 1990s, IFAP started a programme with the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) to strengthen linkages between farmers' organizations and research institutes. It found that, in large part, research results did not reach the farmers' fields in developing countries, and that research agendas did not reflect the farmers' real needs.

88. The Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR) was set up in October 1996 to try to strengthen links between research institutes and stakeholders, including farmers. IFAP and Via Campesina represent farmers on the GFAR Steering Committee.

89. Farmers welcome the fact that, over the past two decades, agricultural research has increasingly worked with small-scale farmers' groups. An inventory of participatory research projects within the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) records that 48 per cent of the projects have involved the formation of new, small-scale farmers' groups.

90. Farmers strongly support the recommendation of the stakeholders meeting at the CGIAR Annual General Meeting in November 2001, that farmers' organizations should be represented in the CGIAR with a separate committee and the chair of that committee should be a member of the Executive Committee.

91. The CGIAR International Service for National Agricultural Research (ISNAR) is doing work on training and capacity-building to facilitate the agricultural innovation process in which the linkages between agricultural researchers, extension, farmers and other stakeholders are addressed. Farmer feedback, typically involving groups of farmers, is now becoming part of the agricultural innovation process. New technologies should not be imposed on farming communities; rather, they should build on the local knowledge of farmers and enrich it.

92. At the national level, Egypt is a good example of a country where collaboration programmes have been established between farmers' organizations and agricultural research institutes to ensure sustainable land management. There have been many achievements such as the creation of parks, erosion-care/soil conservations practices and land distribution to recent graduates sensitive to sustainable agriculture issues. This collaboration has included the realization of irrigation systems as well as the recycling of waste water.

Capacity-building

93. If hunger and poverty are to be reduced, then the market power of the farmers needs to be strengthened relative to the other food-chain partners. Today, a few giant multinational companies increasingly dominate international food and agricultural markets. Effective partnerships are partnerships among equals, and today farmers are unequal players.

94. Farmers also have to be organized and to act in unison in order to effectively adopt sustainable farming practices. For example, environmentally friendly pest control practices could easily be negated if even only one farmer does not cooperate. Farmers' organizations are critical for disseminating information and technology to farmers, synchronizing their activities, monitoring activities and effects, and mobilizing farmers to cooperate. In many cases, consolidated efforts are also needed to mitigate effects of powerful natural forces like typhoons and floods or infestation, and these can be carried out only through strong organizations.

95. Farmers' organizations need capacity-building. In Tunisia, an ambitious water programme has been put in place that is aimed at strengthening the capacities of professional associations (Associations d'Intérêt Collectif). These associations supply 40 per cent of the water for the rural areas. This capacity-building programme covers both the technical and managerial levels, and also focuses on sensitizing users. Training sessions are provided for the persons who are responsible for running these associations.

Movement-to-movement support

96. Paragraph 32.10 of Agenda 21 states that "representative organizations of farmers should establish programmes for the development and support of farmers' organizations, particularly in developing countries".

97. The "Peasant-to-Peasant Programme" (Programa De Campesino a Campesino) (PCaC) in Nicaragua is a good example of movement-to-movement support among farmers. Set up by the Nicaraguan farmers'

union (Unión Nacional de Agricultores y Ganaderos de Nicaragua (UNAG)), in 1987, PCaC promotes sustainable agriculture in fragile ecosystems using local resources and local knowledge of farmers. Medium-term involvement of experienced farmers in the form of partnerships and/or mentorships should be standard practice in transferring skills and technology.

98. In May 2000, IFAP set up an international movement-to-movement Development Cooperation Programme under which farmers' organizations in industrialized countries help to strengthen farmers' organizations in developing countries. This programme is supported by nine agri-agencies linked to farmers' organizations in Europe, Canada and Japan. One of these agencies, Agriterra (Netherlands), has set up a "PeasantsWorldwide" interactive web site to facilitate communications in the process of strengthening farmers' organizations in developing countries.

99. The capacity-building needs of farmers' organizations from developing countries are immense. More development assistance should therefore be directed towards strengthening the ability of farmers to participate in their own development, through farmers' organizations.

Future priorities for farmers: recommendations

100. The following recommendations are made:

1. The drain of resources away from agriculture, as well as the sharp fall in assistance for agricultural development, must be reversed.

2. Development efforts must focus more on people and their organizations, and particularly on peasant farmers. One of the keys to a successful fight against hunger is having well-organized partners to work with, like farmers' organizations. Strengthening institutional capacity of civil society organizations, and involving them as partners in development efforts, therefore needs to be a cornerstone of any strategy for reaching the rural poor.

3. In order to escape from poverty, farmers in developing countries need possibilities for going beyond producing food for their families, and generating income from the commercial market. For this, they need market opportunities. They also need technical assistance in order to be able to exploit those opportunities, and a favourable agricultural policy environment.

4. If hunger and poverty are to be reduced, then the market power of the farmers needs to be strengthened relative to the other food-chain partners. A few giant multinational companies are increasingly dominating commercial food and agricultural markets. There are many cases where deregulation and liberalization have resulted in severe pressure on producer prices and increases in the margins of the traders. Agricultural policies should therefore help to promote the economic organization of farmers.

5. The international institutions must adopt policies that promote global economic development, poverty elimination and food security through measures that correct the serious imbalances in the international investment and trading system operating against small-scale farmers in the developing countries.

6. It is important that the rules of IMF, the World Bank and the World Trade Organization allow Governments to pursue agricultural policies, and research and advisory services that promote the sustainable development of agriculture, even in areas of the world where the costs of sustainable agricultural production are higher than world market prices.

7. Farmers need secure access to resources on a long-term basis. In particular, this means granting secure land tenure to farmers, secure water rights, access to credit at affordable prices, and access to genetic resources such as improved seeds and livestock. These measures do not require high levels of government expenditure, but they have a very significant impact in motivating farmers.

8. Efficient infrastructure for marketing, transportation and communications is an essential part of a sustainable agricultural system. Rural infrastructure is important not only for farmers as producers, but also for farmers as citizens and their quality of life in the rural areas.

9. Farm programmes need to address the special situation of women farmers who produce much of the food in developing countries.

101. In the final analysis, it will be the farmer who will make or break any strategy to achieve food security. It is therefore critical not to lose focus on the key player. If the World Summit on Sustainable Development includes as one of its priorities strengthening family-farm agriculture and facilitating the self-help efforts of the farmers, then significant progress can be made towards meeting the United Nations millennium development goals (see A/56/326, annex).

102. Governments and development organizations should therefore recognize farmers, and their organizations, as full partners in the development process. Legislation must facilitate the organization of farmers, and acknowledge the right of farmers to speak for themselves. Public services must be responsive to the needs of farmers. Development agencies must give priority to building capacity of farmers' organizations, and coordinate their efforts and harmonize their approaches.

103. Finally, it is in the interest of everyone that genuine peace based on justice be put in place, especially in the countryside. For farmers, it is the final ingredient for achieving sustainable development in the world. Civil society organizations can help to defuse conflicts and promote peace and stability, as shown by the IFAP Mediterranean Committee meetings in Jerusalem and in the United Nations buffer zone in Cyprus. Therefore, even when Governments are in conflict, civil society organizations should not be prevented from meeting and cooperating if they wish to do so.

Notes

[1] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992*, vol. I, *resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex II.

[2] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2001, Supplement No. 3* (E/2001/23), chap. II, sect. A.

[3] FCCC/CP/1997/7/Add.1, decision 1/CP.3, annex.

[4] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1771, No. 30822.